

# Fuelling Fitness – Common Myths Busted



**Myth:** I need a special diet and sports supplements now that I'm exercising regularly.

**BUSTED!** For your active lifestyle, focus on tasty and healthy food. Follow *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* (at [www.myfoodguide.ca](http://www.myfoodguide.ca)) to get the energy and vitamins & minerals needed for your active lifestyle!

- Vegetables & Fruit, Grain Products and Milk & Alternatives provide carbohydrates to fuel active muscles. Milk & Alternatives and Meat & Alternatives provide high quality protein to build and repair muscles.
- Foods from all four food groups provide vitamins and minerals which help turn food into energy your body can use, build strong bones and muscles, and ward off infection. If you are very active you may need to eat more servings from each of the food groups. (Competitive athletes should see a Registered Dietitian as they may have special nutrient needs).
- Products like stimulants, muscle building or weight loss supplements are not needed to get the most out of your activity or to gain muscle or lose weight.

**Myth:** You need to drink as much water as you possibly can before, during and after exercise to perform your best.

**BUSTED!** Think gulps not gallons! We all need water, but don't overdo it. While dehydration (not enough water)

during exercise is more common than drinking too much, occasionally some people have developed a serious condition known as hyponatremia (low blood sodium) from drinking way too much.

A safe game plan is:

- Stay hydrated day to day. Water, milk, soy beverages, 100% juice, and even tea, coffee, and some foods all count.
- During exercise, drink to help replace water lost in sweat. How much? There's no 'one size fits all' answer as we all sweat at different rates. Keep water handy and sip it during your workout. When you're sweating heavily or it is hot, drink more.
- After exercise, regular meals, snacks and beverages will help replace what you have lost in sweat. Enjoy a glass of water or chocolate milk after your workout. Have an apple with some cheese for a snack. If it is meal time try a recipe from Dietitians of Canada's Simply Great Food cookbook such as **Jerk Chicken Salad** served up with a **Mango Lassi** to drink. Check out [www.dietitians.ca/eatwell](http://www.dietitians.ca/eatwell) for the recipes!

Trusted advice from dietitians. [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)

**Myth:** It is cold outside. I don't need to worry about hydration during winter activities or sports.

**BUSTED!** Sure it is cold but you can still sweat up a storm under all that warm hockey equipment and piles of winter clothing. Sweat needs to evaporate to help cool the body. When it can't (because of clothes or sports gear) the body heats up making us sweat more. So remember, even in cold conditions keep fluids handy so they are easy to grab and sip before, during and after activity.

**Myth:** Downing an "energy drink" on the way to the gym is the best way to keep your energy levels up for a workout.

**BUSTED!** Healthy eating and enough sleep are the real keys to long-lasting energy to get you through your day and your workout!

If you are running out of energy, consider how long it has been since you've had something to eat or drink. A glass of water with a small meal or healthy snack a couple of hours before your workout can give you a real boost. Try a peanut butter sandwich on whole grain bread and a banana.

- Energy drinks are not sports drinks. Sports drinks are designed for rapid rehydration and refuelling during exercise. However, the high sugar levels and fizz (carbonation) in energy drinks can make it hard to drink enough to stay well hydrated during a workout.

The caffeine in energy drinks is usually more than double that in soft drinks. Caffeine makes you alert for short time but tends to be followed by feelings of low energy. Too much caffeine can also get in the way of a good night's sleep.

- The safety of energy drinks is also in question. It is not known if ingredients like taurine and glucuronolactone are safe, especially when mixed with caffeine.

**Fact:** The best source for nutrition information is a Registered Dietitian.

**FACT!** True indeed! This is no myth at all!

The best source for nutrition information is a Registered Dietitian. It is best to consult a dietitian who can provide advice for your specific nutrition needs. Some dietitians are specialists in sports nutrition. To find a dietitian: visit [www.dietitians.ca/find](http://www.dietitians.ca/find), ask your doctor for a referral, or call Dietitians of Canada Consulting Dietitians Network at 1-888-901-7776.

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